



CITY OF KENT, OHIO

CITY COUNCIL ■ 320 S. DEPEYSTER STREET ■ KENT, OHIO 44240 ■ 330-678-8007

Community Development Committee Meeting Wednesday, October 6, 2021

Chair Kuhar called the Community Development Committee of Kent City Council to order at 6:33 p.m.

PRESENT: Mr. Jack Amrhein; Mr. Michael DeLeone; Mr. Garret Ferrara; Mr. John Kuhar; Ms. Gwen Rosenberg; Ms. Heidi Shaffer Bish; Mr. Roger Sidoti; Mr. Robin Turner; Ms. Tracy Wallach

ALSO PRESENT: Mr. Jerry T. Fiala, Mayor and President of Council; Mr. Dave Ruller, City Manager; Ms. Hope Jones, Law Director; Ms. Bridget Susel, Community Development Director; Mr. Jim Bowling, City Engineer; Ms. Joan Seidel, Health Commissioner; Ms. Rhonda Hall, Budget and Finance Director; Mr. Gary Bishop, IT Manager; Mr. Nick Shearer, Chief of Police; Mr. Bill Myers, Fire Chief; Ms. Amy Wilkens, Clerk of Council

There was one (1) item on the Agenda.

1) Garage 108 Architecture Review Board Appeal

Chair Kuhar introduced Ms. Bridget Susel, Community Development Director, to address the topic of tonight's discussion.

Ms. Susel referenced her memo addressed to Council and that the applicant is here presenting her case. Currently, Garage 108 has two signs on their business and appeared before the ARB requesting sign approval. Returning a month later, realizing the sign was hard to see, the owner, Ms. Valerie Landis returned to the ARB requesting the front sign to be internally lit. ARB heard the case and no motion was made, therefore approval for the front of the sign was not made. Ms. Susel said she provided verbatim meetings from that meeting attached to her memo to Council

Valerie Landis appeared before Council requesting the sign for her business. She worked with the sign manufacturer on its design, looked at existing signs in the community and used the same vendor others used. She would like a light to illuminate the letters. She is simply asking to have light inside the sign on the front of the building (on College Street).

Ms. Shaffer Bish asked what signs were in the vicinity. She said the closest was Karate, Brewhouse, Huntington Bank, Five Guys, among many others internally lit. Additional signs outside of the district also have internally lit signs.

Ms. Tracy Wallach asked if there were any apartments in the area that would be bothered by the light. Ms. Susel said there were not.

Mr. Ferrara asked if this would help her business. She said it would. He asked if there would be additional lights, she said there would not.

Ms. Shaffer asked Ms. Landis to describe some of the hardships she has experienced because of this. Ms. Landis said that coming into Kent and having the first thing not be positive, after her careful consideration, it felt hostile at best. Seeing nearly a dozen signs in the community that have internally lit signs, and to also have it written in the code adds to the confusion.

Ms. Shaffer Bish asked what additional cost was to her. Ms. Landis said there were physical problems such as the building being brick and that she tried to make the least impact on the building. Having the tree in front of the sign makes the sign read "Rage 108" which is not the name of her business.

Mr. Turner asked Ms. Susel what the reason was for the exception from the Architecture Review Board (ARB).

Ms. Susel said ARB views each case individually. The guidelines are written for an historic district, which this was not. For the most part ARB does not support internally lit signs, but prefer externally lit signs. Community Development is currently working on having someone come in to work on the new design guidelines.

Ms. Susel said staff reviews the zoning code and presents facts to the Architecture Review Board and decisions are made on discussions made with the board.

Mr. Sidoti apologized that this felt like an adversarial situation, and that's not what Kent is all about. He has a few questions. He asked if when the signs were purchased if they would both be internally lit. She said no. He said they look identical. He asked if the ARB broke a precedent by allowing an internally lit sign by allowing it on Haymaker. Ms. Susel explained in more detail ARB's past decisions. Ms. Landis took the sign down and then found out she had to replace it within 180 days.

Mr. Sidoti said he was confused as to why the sign on the front can't be front lit. Ms. Landis said she would have to install more holes in the masonry. He thought she wouldn't need much attachment to the brick. Ms. Landis said it would not be a desired design choice. Ms. Susel said if the appeal is granted she could continue with her current sign.

Ms. Rosenberg said there are a lot of other internally lit signs downtown and asked if she felt there was a reasonable explanation why her request was denied, or if she feels it's an arbitrary decision. Ms. Landis said she felt like it was a retaliation of previous meetings due to lack of knowledge. She said she didn't receive a good explanation of why it was

denied. She gave a good deal of consideration to the sign and felt like this was a good compromise. She said she didn't understand why it wasn't approved

Ms. Shaffer Bish said she respects the Architecture Review Board, but believes we have to respect new and locally owned businesses. This is not prohibited in the Zoning Code and thinks it's a matter of fair and equal treatment and trying to keep a new business from undue hardship.

Ms. Rosenberg said design guidelines are important but feels that when it comes to government and having the public coming before the board, we need to tidy things up. She said this seems very reasonable to her and the reason to deny it doesn't strike her as strong enough.

Mr. Ferrara said we need to support businesses coming into Kent. He said the building looks great and is a vast improvement on what is already there.

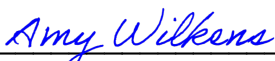
Mr. Turner said there is some type of gap with what the ARB is doing. He apologized to Ms. Landis that she felt an adversarial relationship.

Ms. Shaffer Bish clarified she thinks the building does look good and in the absence of design guidelines that are clear, it could overwhelm the process.

Mr. Sidoti thanked Ms. Landis and says we have a flawed process. Mr. Sidoti said the problem lies with us and that we need to clean up the design guidelines. He said decisions should not have to be made at this level.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE APPEAL OF GARAGE 108 MADE BY Ms. Shaffer Bish
SECONDED by Ms. Rosenberg and CARRIED by a voice vote of 7-2-0 with Mr. Amrhein and Mr. Sidoti voting "No".

Seeing no further business, the Community Development Committee Meeting adjourned at 7:09 p.m.



Amy Wilkens
Clerk of Council

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

- 1) Approve the appeal of Garage 108 to allow for a backlit sign to be hung on the front of the business.



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Health and Safety Committee Meeting Wednesday, October 6, 2021

Chair Amrhein called the Health and Public Safety Committee of Kent City Council to order at 7:10 p.m.

PRESENT: Mr. Jack Amrhein; Mr. Michael DeLeone; Mr. Garret Ferrara; Mr. John Kuhar; Ms. Gwen Rosenberg; Ms. Heidi Shaffer Bish; Mr. Roger Sidoti; Mr. Robin Turner; Ms. Tracy Wallach

ALSO PRESENT: Mr. Jerry T. Fiala, Mayor and President of Council; Mr. Dave Ruller, City Manager; Ms. Hope Jones, Law Director; Ms. Bridget Susel, Community Development Director; Mr. Jim Bowling, City Engineer; Ms. Joan Seidel, Health Commissioner; Ms. Rhonda Hall, Budget and Finance Director; Mr. Gary Bishop, IT Manager; Mr. Nick Shearer, Chief of Police; Mr. Bill Myers, Fire Chief; Ms. Amy Wilkens, Clerk of Council

There were two (2) items on the Agenda.

1) **Proposal to Consider Dispatch Services to Brimfield**

Chair Amrhein introduced Police Chief, Nicholas Shearer to address the topic of tonight's discussion.

Chief Shearer was approached by Brimfield Twp. Fire Department who would like to move forward with the City of Kent dispatching for them. He did a lot of research and came up with a cost of \$ 44,040/year . There may be times where extra dispatch would be required, but generally staffing would not need to be increased.

Mr. Kuhar asked if the contract be a term contract or per call. He asked if would handle all 911. He said no, the general 911 call would go into Kent State University and if it is determined to be fire would be routed to the fire department. It may go to a per call contract in the future, but for now it will be a locked in rate.

Mr. Ferrara asked if the request is because Kent State cannot handle the calls. He said no, they were not happy with what they were receiving.

Mr. Ferrara asked a clarifying question on funding and if this would be revenue generating. Chief Shearer said it may be profitable this year, but they are not doing this as a money maker.

Mayor Fiala asked if in a year if they would entertain doing this with Police. He does not believe this will happen and that they will stay with their current service.

MOTION TO AUTHORIZE THE PROPOSAL TO PROVIDE DISPATCH SERVICES TO BRIMFIELD MADE BY SECONDED BY and CARRIED by a voice vote of 9-0-0.

2) DORA Expansion

Chair Amrhein introduced Economic Development Director, Mr. Tom Wilke, to speak on the next topic.

Mr. Wilke said he had two different businesses approach him, Kent Cycle Shop and Belltower Brewery, asking to be included in the Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area (DORA) boundaries. He reached out to neighboring properties and Chief Shearer and received no objections to this expansion. The boundary would be increased with 33 liquor license holders. If approved, they will work with Service on updating signage.

Mr. Turner asked if he received responses from the public. Mr. Wilke explained that was the point of the public hearing.

Mr. Kuhar asked if he talked to businesses near Wild Goat, and Mr. Wilke said he did and that they asked to be included in it in the future.

Ms. Rosenberg asked about any additional trash receptacles needed. Mr. Wilke said recycle bins are provided to those on the DORA and the business would be responsible for their own.

Mr. DeLeon asked why Kent Cycle was interested. Mr. Wilke explained that the business next door, N. Water Brewery, is within the boundaries and its customers could come over to their business.

Mr. Sidoti asked if there was any type of thought about litter on the bridge. He said they can look at putting additional trashcans on the bridge. Mr. Wilke said the bridge is in the DORA. Chief Shearer said if any beverage was purchased at a special event they would need to stay in that area. As long as the sale of liquor is not taking place outside of Belltower Brewing, beverages can be consumed in that area.

Mr. DeLeone asked about crossing the train tracks. There was no concern from the railroad.

MOTION TO AUTHORIZE THE DORA BOUNDARIES AS TO INCLUDE BELLTOWER BREWERY AND BIKE SHOP MADE BY Mr. Sidoti SECONDED BY Mr. Ferrara and CARRIED by a voice vote of 8-0-1 with Mr. Kuhar abstaining.

Mr. Ferrara said people are in favor of this and the only thing people were concerned of was crossing the river.

Ms. Wallach is very happy Kent Cycle will be included in the DORA, as they have been asking about this for some time.

Seeing no further business, the Health and Public Safety Committee Meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Amy Wilkens

Amy Wilkens
Clerk of Council

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

- 1) Authorize the proposal to provide dispatch services to Brimfield Township.
- 2) Authorize the expansion of the DORA boundaries to include Kent Cycle and The Bell Tower Brewery.



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Streets, Sidewalks and Utilities Committee Meeting Wednesday, October 6, 2021

Chair Sidoti called the Streets, Sidewalks and Utilities Committee of Kent City Council to order at 7:25 p.m.

PRESENT: Mr. Jack Amrhein; Mr. Michael DeLeone; Mr. Garret Ferrara; Mr. John Kuhar; Ms. Gwen Rosenberg; Ms. Heidi Shaffer Bish; Mr. Roger Sidoti; Mr. Robin Turner; Ms. Tracy Wallach

ALSO PRESENT: Mr. Jerry T. Fiala, Mayor and President of Council; Mr. Dave Ruller, City Manager; Ms. Hope Jones, Law Director; Ms. Bridget Susel, Community Development Director; Mr. Jim Bowling, City Engineer; Ms. Joan Seidel, Health Commissioner; Ms. Rhonda Hall, Budget and Finance Director; Mr. Gary Bishop, IT Manager; Mr. Nick Shearer, Chief of Police; Mr. Bill Myers, Fire Chief; Ms. Amy Wilkens, Clerk of Council

There were four (4) items on the Agenda.

1) **Gougler and River Street Improvements**

Mr. Sidoti introduced Mr. Jim Bowling to speak on the first topic.

Mr. Jim Bowling said River Street and Gougler are considered a high crash corridor. They would like to submit to the State Highway Safety Program for design and planning money to continue to look into improving this area. The crash problems come from people turning left from the right lane.

Ms. Rosenberg said it is also an area that is difficult to walk in. Mr. Bowling said it would improve this. Ms. Rosenberg said this will save a lot of stress.

Mr. Ruller said the concept is not planned or designed yet and the community and Council will have more time for input.

Ms. Shaffer Bish asked about Mantua Street. Mr. Bowling said there was not the same problem due to being more residential. She asked if part of the study would be looking at this. Mr. Bowling said this was correct. He said he sees the potential of a lot improvement in the area with this project.

Mayor Fiala asked if there were any concerns due to it being a state route. Mr. Bowling said there were not.

MOTION MADE to AUTHORIZE THE GRANT APPLICATION made by Ms. Shaffer Bish **SECONDED** by Mr. Ferrara and **CARRIED** by a voice vote of 9-0-0.

2) **Patio License Agreement at 257 N. Water Street**

Mr. Bowling said 257 N. Water Street is near completion and they are requesting a fenced in patio.

MOVE TO AUTHORIZE THE PATIO LICENSE FOR 257 N. WATER STREET made by Ms. Shaffer Bish **SECONDED** by Ms. Rosenberg and **PASSED** by a voice vote of 9-0-0.

3) **Water Tower Easement**

Mr. Sidoti introduced Law Director, Ms. Hope Jones to present on the third topic.

Ms. Hope Jones said this is a renewal of a five-year term. The price went up 10% to \$750 month for a total of \$9,000 a year.

Ms. Wallach asked why this is going up so high. Ms. Jones stated this is the normal amount.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE WATER TOWER EASEMENT AGREEMENT WITH KENT STATE UNIVERSITY made by Mr. Ferrara, **SECONDED** by Ms. Rosenberg and **CARRIED** by a voice vote of 9-0-0.

4) **Ice Rink Update**

Ms. Melanie Baker came up to the podium in her Kent winter gear to get all excited for the ice rink on Erie Street.

The rink is scheduled for delivery the week of November 15th. Weather dependent, she anticipates Franklin Ave. would be reopened and the tables from that location would be moved to Erie Street.

Ms. Baker reviewed possible future programming, which include youth hockey, University hockey, a night with the Cleveland Monsters, and possibly curling competitions. She suggested possible sponsorship from Council. At this time, skate rental would be free, customers would just need to sign a waiver. She is planning for lighting and working with Central Maintenance. She added parking is not an issue and the PARTA deck is right next door. A website is currently being developed to help

get the word out. Central Maintenance has begun making road closure signs as well. She thanked all involved from KSU and the City.

Ms. Tracy Wallach asked if the ice depends on the weather. Ms. Baker said rain and warm temperatures would be the enemy. She said they could use it up to 40 degrees.


Mr. Kuhar asked if there was a fee. Ms. Baker said it would be free but would need to sign a waiver.

Ms. Rosenberg asked about Parks and Rec involvement. Ms. Baker said Parks and Recreation Director, Angela Manley, has been very helpful thinking through all that needs to be done and that the University is running and maintaining this site.

Ms. Shaffer Bish asked about restrooms. Ms. Baker said port-o potties would be provided. Most venues they've looked into use these.

Ms. Baker played a video created by Kent State University that will be distributed to help promote the new ice rink.

Seeing no further business, the Streets, Sidewalks and Utilities Committee Meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.



Amy Wilkens
Clerk of Council

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

- 1) Authorize the application for a grant through the State Highway Safety Program for a study to improve Gougler and River Streets.
- 2) Authorize the license agreement with 257 N. Water Street for a patio.
- 3) Authorize the renewal of the water tower easement agreement with Kent State University.



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Finance Committee Meeting Wednesday, October 6, 2021

Chair DeLeone called the Finance Committee of Kent City Council to order at 7:49 p.m.

PRESENT: Mr. Jack Amrhein; Mr. Michael DeLeone; Mr. Garret Ferrara; Mr. John Kuhar; Ms. Gwen Rosenberg; Ms. Heidi Shaffer Bish; Mr. Roger Sidoti; Mr. Robin Turner; Ms. Tracy Wallach

ALSO PRESENT: Mr. Jerry T. Fiala, Mayor and President of Council; Mr. Dave Ruller, City Manager; Ms. Hope Jones, Law Director; Ms. Melanie Baker, Service Director; Ms. Bridget Susel, Community Development Director; Mr. Jim Bowling, City Engineer; Ms. Joan Seidel, Health Commissioner; Ms. Rhonda Hall, Budget and Finance Director; Mr. Gary Bishop, IT Manager; Ms. Angela Manley, Parks and Recreation Director; Mr. Nick Shearer, Chief of Police; Mr. Bill Myers, Fire Chief; Ms. Amy Wilkens, Clerk of Council

There were five (5) items on the Agenda.

1) 2021 Budget Appropriations Amendment

Chair DeLeone introduced Ms. Rhonda Hall, Finance Director, to tonight's meeting to present on the first topic.

Ms. Rhonda Hall is requesting approval for her budget amendment that was presented in the Council Packet for tonight's meeting. It is the fifth amendment of the year.

There were no questions from Council or the audience.

MOTION TO AUTHORIZE THE BUDGET AMENDMENT AS PRESENTED made by Mr. Kuhar **SECONDED** by Ms. Wallach and **CARRIED** by a voice vote of 9-0-0.

2) Proposed New Non-School TIF's

Ms. Hall said this is something new to the City. When a new building or project is started, the increase in the assessed value of the area is what the TIF is placed on, which allows the City to gain any additional property taxes, excluding the schools. The City will receive a portion of the TIF, the non-school portion. She noted that Davey Tree

is included in the Enterprise Zone and will have that for ten years, with a tax abatement of 75% of their property taxes. The Hasawi project is in the CRA, so that will start in year eleven through year thirty and Dunkin' Donuts is going to start immediately. This allows creation of new funds for each and the property tax comes in and is used which as defined in the ordinance. It can be used for construction, improvements, lighting, landscaping, sidewalks, etc.

There were no questions from Council or the audience.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE NEW NON-SCHOOL TIFs made by Mr. Ferrara
SECONDED by Mr. Amrhein and CARRIED by a voice vote of 9 -0-0.

3) Bond for City Hall Payments

Ms. Rhonda Hall said the third item on the agenda is for the City Hall bond issue. This will put a bond issue and an ordinance in front of Council in the next meeting, not to exceed the \$9,350,000. After bids are open, the exact amount will be determined. The ordinance will be after receipt of the packet, so it will be written as to not exceed that amount.

Ms. Wallach asked if the bids are still too high, would we need to rebid again. Ms. Hall said that would be up to the bids. Ms. Wallach asked about interest rates. Ms. Hall has received protentional rates which are the low 2% conservatively, but could go lower, it just depends, as rates are going up and down.

There were no further questions from Council and no questions from the audience.

MOTION TO AUTHORIZE PROCEEDING WITH BOND ISSUES FOR THE NEW CITY HALL MADE by Mr. Sidoti SECONDED by Mr. Amrhein and CARRIED by a voice vote of 9-0-0 with Mr. Kuhar abstaining.

4.) Depository Agreement

Ms. Rhonda Hall said this was a housekeeping item. Every five years, according to Chapter 135 of the ORC, cities are to go out to bid for the City's depositories for active, interim and inactive deposits. It didn't come to her attention until just recently that this was needed this year, so we are having a Special Council meeting to extend the current contracts with banks. This will allow us to go out to bid and then will return in November with the City's depositories with specific banks.

MOVE TO ALLOW ADVERTISING, BIDDING AND SELECTION OF CITY DEPOSITORIES made by Ms. Wallach SECONDED BY Mr. Amrhein and CARRIED by a voice vote of 9-0-0.

5.) Work Force Development Grant

Ms. Joan Siedel said the pandemic has highlighted the need for additional funding for public health. As part of the CDC Response Cooperative Agreement, the Ohio Dept. of Health will award up to a total of \$27 million to Ohio's 113 local health departments to be used to recruit, hire and train personnel to address COVID-19 needs. The grant is for a total of \$180,000 with a stipulation to use 50% of the sliding scale for new hires. An intent to apply form, a survey, and budget justification was submitted by the Health Department. The final step is to receive approval from City Council to receive this grant. Portage County will administer the grant and have already received the funding.

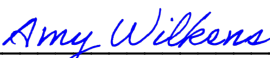
Mr. Ferrara asked if the hiring of staff would be part time or full time and what type of benefits they would receive. Ms. Seidel said she was looking at using the bulk of the grant to fund a 32-hour position that would be split between the Health and Fire Departments to help start its paramedicine program. After June 30th, they would renew the grant for up to five years. After that, it would be up to the local Health Department to either find their own funding or find other grants. Ms. Seidel added this was a gift and would be a good transition into the paramedicine program. It would be a position with benefits.

MOVE TO APPROVE APPLICATION FOR THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT GRANT MADE BY Ms. Shaffer Bish SECONDED BY Ms. Wallach and CARRIED by a voice vote of 9-0-0.

Ms. Shaffer Bish said this is a great opportunity and would vote to receive the grant.

There were no further questions from City Council members and no questions from the public.

Seeing no further business, the Finance Committee Meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.



Amy Wilkens
Clerk of Council

Actions Recommended:

- 1) Approve the 2021 budget appropriations amendments.
- 2) Authorize the approval of the new TIF Agreements.
- 3) Authorize proceeding with bond issues to finance the new City Hall project.
- 4) Authorize the advertisement, bidding and selection of the City's bank depository services.

5) Approve the ODH Workforce Grant acceptance and allocation.